

WORKSHOP 3: ARTS-BASED AND VISUAL METHODOLOGIES AS TOOLS FOR COLLABORATIVE MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM

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Background: While potentially further exacerbated by the COVID19 pandemic, globally in the last decades we have witnessed an increase in mental disorders and suicidal behaviours. People experiencing mental illnesses are often subjected to various human rights abuses and social injustice paired with often unavailable or inadequate care.

Aims: During the workshop, the participants will reflect and share learnings about the benefits and challenges in using ethnographic documentary and participatory visual methodologies to explore these sensitive and often misrepresented issues as well as using creative forms of engagement to ignite social and system changes.

Method: The facilitator will show footage and other data from interdisciplinary projects about mental health/illness in countries such as Indonesia, India, Ghana, Australia and the Philippines. In particular, she will refer to her current ESRC/GCRF-funded project “Together for Mental Health: Using collaborative visual research methods to understand experiences of mental illness, coercion and restraint in Ghana and Indonesia” (a collaboration with King’s College London, University of Ghana, University of Gadjah Mada, Indonesia and partners from local mental health advocacy groups and arts organisations). This project aimed to use ethnographic film and participatory methods to explore attempts by mental health workers to establish collaborations with faith-based and traditional healers to prevent the use of coercion and provide care for persons affected by mental illness. Although there have been long-standing calls for such collaboration, there has been little investigation of how such relationships would work in practice in specific locations with differing healing traditions and mental health systems.

Potential outcomes: Extracts from these projects will be used as prompts to debate and gain reciprocal knowledge around key ethical and methodological concerns in carrying out applied visual research in mental health and human rights.

Members of the research teams in Ghana and Indonesia will co-facilitate the small group activity and sharing.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Using experiences in arts-based and visual methodologies for research about social injustice and human rights abuses against people with mental illness in various LMICs, the participants will be able to identify and reflect on the benefits and challenges in using these tools for exploring sensitive and often misrepresented issues.

2. Participants will plan and propose how ‘collaboration’ good practices within (activist/applied) mental health research can be documented and supported using engaging and impactful creative methodologies.

References

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